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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. The status of the claims after amendment will be as follows:

Claims 1 - 8 (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) A soldering method comprising:
preparing a solder bath having an initial composition prior to initial soldering using the solder bath and containing an oxidation suppressing element;

performing soldering of a plurality of members in the solder bath; and then

replenishing the solder bath with a replenishment solder alloy having a higher concentration of the oxidation suppressing element than does the initial composition of the solder bath.

10. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the replenishment solder alloy has the same chemical composition as the initial composition of the solder bath except for the content of the oxidation suppressing element.

11. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the solder bath contains copper, and the replenishment solder alloy has the same chemical composition as the initial composition of the solder bath except for the content of the

oxidation suppressing element and copper.

12. (previously presented) A soldering method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the concentration of the oxidation suppressing element in the replenishment solder alloy is 2 to 6 times the concentration of the oxidation suppressing element in the initial composition of the solder bath.

Claims 13 - 15 (cancelled)

16. (previously presented) A soldering method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the oxidation suppressing element is selected from P, Ge, Ga, and Ce.

17. (currently amended) A soldering method as claimed in claim 9 wherein ~~the solder bath and the replenishment solder alloy each comprise Sn, Ag, and P, and the replenishment solder alloy contains 60 - 100 ppm by mass of P.~~

Claims 18 - 23 (cancelled)

24. (currently amended) A soldering method comprising:
preparing a solder bath having an initial composition prior to initial soldering using the solder bath and containing a first nonzero concentration of an oxidation suppressing element;
performing a first soldering operation for a period of a

plurality of days using the solder bath while replenishing the solder bath with a first replenishment solder alloy having the same composition as the initial composition of the solder bath to maintain the surface level of molten solder in the solder bath, the concentration of the oxidation suppressing element in the solder bath reaching a second concentration at the end of the period;

determining the average rate of decrease of the oxidation suppressing element in the solder bath during the first soldering operation over the period; and

performing a second soldering operation using the solder bath after the first soldering operation and starting when the concentration of the oxidation suppressing element in the solder bath is at the second concentration while replenishing the solder bath to maintain the surface level of molten solder in the solder bath with a second replenishment solder alloy ~~having the same composition as the initial composition of the solder bath except for~~ having a ~~second~~ third concentration of the oxidation suppressing element which is higher than the first concentration, the ~~second~~ third concentration ~~being~~ having a value such that the rate of supply of the oxidation suppressing element in the second replenishment solder alloy to the solder bath in the second soldering operation is greater than or equal to the determined average rate of decrease of the oxidation suppressing element in the solder bath during the first soldering operation.

Claims 25 - 26 (cancelled)

27. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein the ~~second~~ third concentration is 2 to 6 times the first concentration.

28. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein the ~~second~~ third concentration is 60 to 100 ppm.

Claim 29 (cancelled)

30. (new) A method as claimed in claim 24 including performing the first soldering operation for approximately 1 - 2 weeks.

31. (new) A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein the second replenishment solder alloy has the same composition as the initial composition of the solder bath except for the oxidation suppressing element.

32. (new) A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein the second replenishment solder alloy has the same composition as the initial composition of the solder bath except for the oxidation suppressing element and copper.

33. (new) A soldering method comprising:

preparing a solder bath having an initial composition prior to initial soldering using the solder bath and containing a nonzero first concentration of an oxidation suppressing element;

multiplying the first concentration by a value from 2 to 6 to obtain a second concentration having a value from 60 to 100 ppm; and

replenishing the solder bath while performing soldering with a replenishment solder alloy containing the oxidation suppressing element in the second concentration to maintain the surface level of molten solder in the solder bath.